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SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. EGYPT: SADAT WORRIED ABOUT ETHIOPIA

FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY HAS INFORMED CHARGE MATTHEWS THAT PRESIDENT SADAT IS ALARMED ABOUT THE "DETERIORATING SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA." ACCORDING TO FAHMY, SOMALI EMISSARIES RECENTLY VOICED STRONG CONCERN ABOUT GROWING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA. SADAT NOW WANTS A "FORMAL US APPRAISAL" OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA, AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE US COUNTERMEASURES. FAHMY ALSO SAID THAT:

--THE MAJORITY OF ETHIOPIAN LEADERS ARE MARXISTS PLAY-
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ING A DOUBLE GAME WITH THE US AND USSR.

--SOMALI RELATIONS WITH THE USSR HAVE DECLINED SINCE PRESIDENT SIAD'S VISIT TO MOSCOW.

--EGYPT HAS AGREED TO SUPPLY SMALL ARMS TO SOMALIA TO ASSIST IT IN ITS GROWING CONFRONTATION WITH ETHIOPIA.

CHARGE'S COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT SADAT AND FAHMY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS TO THE SOUTH AND THAT THE SOMALI EMISSARIES UNDOUBTEDLY STIRRED EGYPTIAN APPREHENSIONS. FAHMY'S DEMARCHE MAY PRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE US INTERESTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA BY WORKING DISCREETLY THROUGH THE EGYPTIANS. (SECRET) CAIRO 873 (LIMDIS) 1/17.)

2. GUATEMALA: BELIZE SOLUTION REMAINS DISTANT

GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA TOLD AMBASSADOR BOSTER THAT THE UK AND GUATEMALA ARE STILL FAR APART IN THEIR POSITIONS ON A BELIZE SETTLEMENT. ACCORDING TO MOLINA:

--THE ISSUE IS POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE, BECAUSE SOME IN THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY WOULD FEEL COMPELLED TO ACT IF PRESSED TO THE WALL.

--THE GOG NEEDS A FACE-SAVING DEVICE, SINCE THE CONSTITUTION CLAIMS BELIZE AS GUATEMALAN TERRITORY AND CALLS FOR ITS RECOVERY.

--TALKS WITH THE BRITISH SHOULD RESUME BY EARLY MARCH, ALTHOUGH NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET.

IN A RELATED CONVERSATION, THE MOFA DIRECTOR FOR BELIZE AFFAIRS INTIMATED THAT GUATEMALA DOES NOT EXPECT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS AND IS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN GETTING
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THROUGH THE 1977 UNGA SESSION AND THE 1978 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WITHOUT A BELIZE CRISIS. HE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN OVER THE UK MILITARY BUILD-UP IN BELIZE, AND HOPED IT DID NOT PORTEND PLANS FOR AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE WITH A DEFENSE GUARANTEE.

AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: THE FOREIGN MINISTER APPEARS INCLINED TO PASS THE BELIZE PROBLEM ON TO GUATEMALA'S NEXT ADMINISTRATION. ALTHOUGH HE MAY WISH FOR GREATER US SUPPORT, HE SEEMS TO RECOGNIZE THAT OUR PRESENT ROLE IS ALL THAT GUATEMALA CAN EXPECT. (CONFIDENTIAL) GUATEMALA 330, 1/17.)

3. SPAIN GRANTING CONCESSIONS TO BASQUES

FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA TOLD AMBASSADOR STABLER ON JANUARY 17 THAT THE BASQUE SITUATION WOULD BEGIN TO SHOW SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT. OREJA, HIMSELF A BASQUE, SAID HE HAD SPENT THE WEEKEND TRYING TO DAMPEN TENSION IN THE AREA BY ACTING

AS A CONDUIT BETWEEN THE GOS AND BASQUE LEADERS, WHO REFUSED TO TALK WITH THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT BEGINNING TODAY THE GOS WOULD UNDERTAKE A SERIES OF CONCILIATORY MOVES INCLUDING:

--ALLOWING USE OF THE BASQUE FLAG;

--UPGRADING USE OF THE BASQUE LANGUAGE;

--EXTENDING SUBSIDIES TO BASQUE-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS; AND

--INSTALLING NEW CIVIL GOVERNORS WHO WILL BE MORE SENSITIVE TO BASQUE ISSUES. (CONFIDENTIAL) MADRID 358, 1/17.)

4. FRANCE: PROTECTING ITS POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
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ACCORDING TO A QUAI OFFICIAL, FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD IS CONTEMPLATING VISITS TO ISRAEL, EGYPT, SYRIA AND LEBANON IN THE COMING MONTHS, ALTHOUGH THE ABU DAUD AFFAIR MAY DELAY HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL. COMMENTING ON GERMAN INITIATIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE SOURCE TOLD EMBASSY PARIS THAT THE FRENCH:

--HAVE ALMOST CONVINCED THE FRG TO ABANDON ITS SUGGESTION FOR EXPANDED EC DECLARATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST; AND

--REGARD AS IMPLAUSIBLE THE CURRENT FRG CONCEPT OF A NEW FORMULA BY THE NINE FOR ACHIEVING PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE QUAI TENDS TO VIEW NASCENT GERMAN DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITH SUSPICION, AS IT FEARS ANYTHING THAT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE THE ARABS' PERCEPTION OF FRANCE AS THEIR BEST FRIEND IN THE WEST. (CONFIDENTIAL) PARIS 1502, 1/17.)

5. BENIN INCIDENT STIRS GUINEAN JITTERS

REACTING TO THE BENIN COUP ATTEMPT, GUINEAN PRESIDENT SEKOU TOURE CALLED UPON AFRICAN NATIONS TO AID BENIN AND CONDEMNED THE COUP AS IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION BY MERCENARIES RECRUITED IN EUROPE, AMERICA AND AFRICA. EMBASSY CONAKRY REPORTS THAT THERE IS INCREASED VIGILANCE IN GUINEA, ACCOMPANIED BY A REVIVAL OF CHARGES BY RADIO CONAKRY OF INTERNATIONAL PLOTTING TO LIQUIDATE THE GUINEAN REVOLUTION.

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EMBASSY COMMENT: THE BENIN EVENTS WILL FEED TOURE'S SUSPICIONS AND, UNFORTUNATELY, LEND AN AIR OF CREDIBILITY TO HIS FANTASTIC CLAIMS OF PLOTS AGAINST GUINEA AND OTHER RADICAL
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AFRICAN STATES. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN TO WHAT EXTENT HE WILL FINGER INDIVIDUAL WESTERN GOVERNMENTS AND TIGHTEN THE SCREWS INTERNALLY. (CONFIDENTIAL) CONAKRY 83, 1/17.)

6. EGYPT AND SUDAN WARN ETHIOPIA

EMBASSY CAIRO REPORTS THAT EGYPT AND SUDAN HAVE TAKEN THE OCCASION OF THEIR SIGNING OF A DEFENSE AGREEMENT ON JANUARY 15 TO ISSUE A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WARNING THAT AGGRESSION AGAINST SUDAN IS TANTAMOUNT TO AGGRESSION AGAINST EGYPT.

IN ADDITION, THE SEMI-OFFICIAL EGYPTIAN MAGAZINE OCTOBER CARRIES TWO ARTICLES WHICH:

--REPORT THAT EGYPT HAS SENT A MESSAGE WARNING ETHIOPIA CONCERNING ALLEGED ANTI-SUDANESE MERCENARY PREPARATIONS THERE AND CAUTIONING THAT CAIRO WILL NOT CONDONE ANY INTERVENTION IN SUDAN; AND

--CITE INFORMED SUDANESE SOURCES AS SAYING THAT AFRICA SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED AT A PREVENTIVE MILITARY ACTION, SINCE KHARTOUM IS CONSIDERING PUTTING THE NEW EGYPTIAN-SUDANESE AGREEMENT "INTO EXECUTION."

EMBASSY CAIRO COMMENTS THAT BOTH PARTIES SEEM TO BE TAKING THEIR NEW PACT SERIOUSLY, WITH ADDIS ABABA REPLACING TRIPOLI AS THE PRINCIPLE TARGET. (UNCLASSIFIED) CAIRO 911, 1/17.)
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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